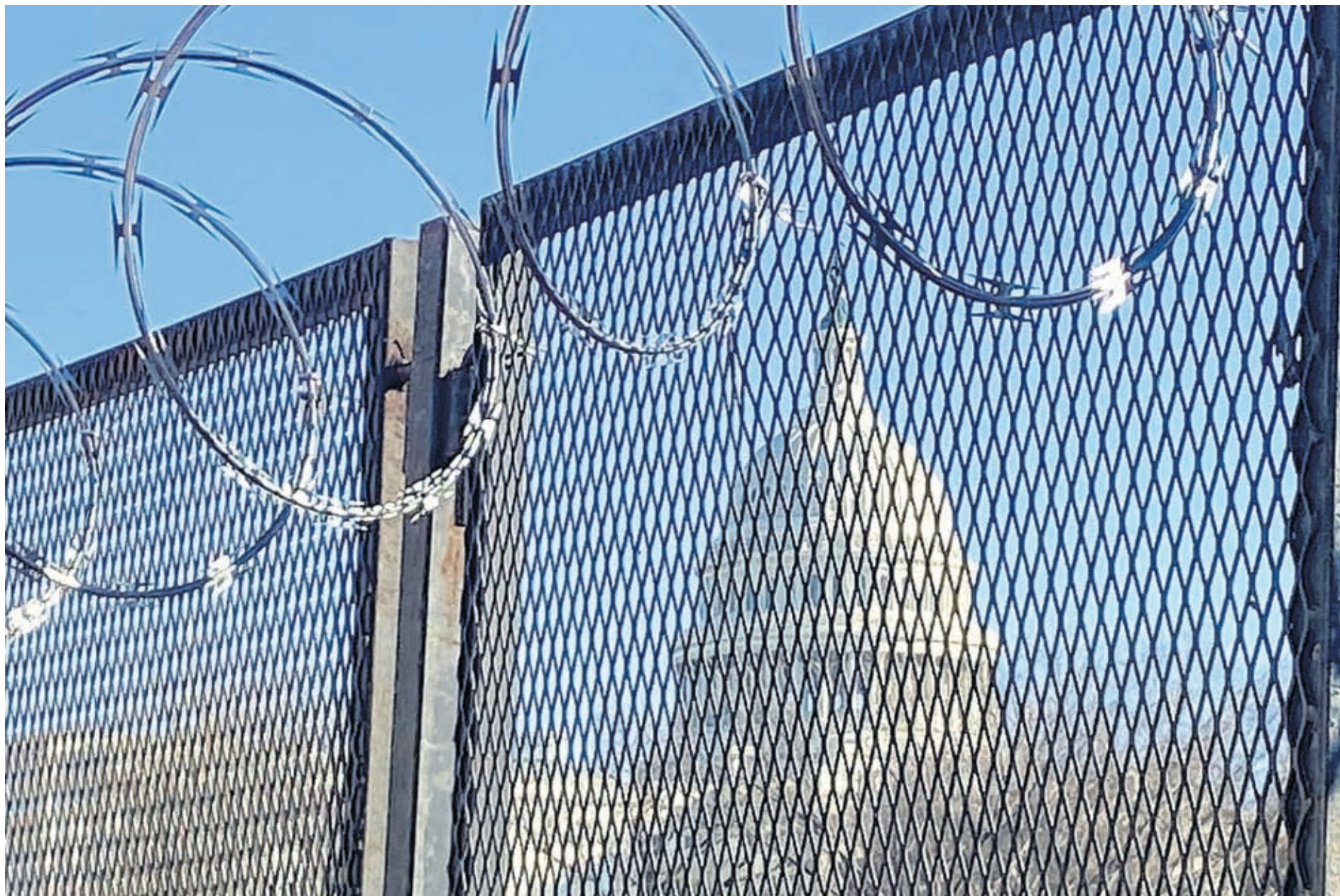




Aruba's ONLY English newspaper



In this Saturday, Jan. 23, 2021 photo, riot fencing and razor wire reinforce the security zone on Capitol Hill in Washington.

Associated Press

Police tighten Congress security in era of rising threats

By ALAN FRAM

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The House's chief law enforcement officer is tightening security for traveling lawmakers as Congress reassesses safety in an era when threats against members were surging even before Donald Trump's supporters attacked the Capitol. Capitol Police officers will be stationed at Washington-area airports and the city's Union Station train depot on busy travel days, the acting House sergeant at arms said in a memo obtained Friday. Timothy P. Blodgett said he's set up an online portal so lawmakers can notify the agency about travel plans, and he urged them to coordinate trips with local po-

lice and airport officials and report suspicious activity to authorities. Capitol Police "will not be available for personal escorts," said the email, sent late Thursday. "However, they will be in place to monitor as members move through the airport."

The steps underscored political divisions that grew increasingly acrid, even potentially dangerous, during Trump's invective-filled four years as president. In addition to personal verbal attacks against perceived foes, Trump stirred up supporters with relentless streams of bogus conspiracies like his false charge that Democrats stole November's election from him.

Continued on Page 2

<p>SAVE 0.57</p> <p>1KG</p> <p>\$5.14</p> <p>Per KG</p> <p>Broccoli Crown</p>	<p>SAVE 2.86</p> <p>1KG</p> <p>\$10.80</p> <p>Per KG</p> <p>US Pork Tenderloin</p>	<p>SAVE 1.72</p> <p>1KG</p> <p>\$9.66</p> <p>Per KG</p> <p>American Yellow Cheese</p>	<p>SAVE 0.23</p> <p>Each</p> <p>\$3.42</p> <p>Pringles Wavy Classic Salted Crisp 4.8oz</p>
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*Offer is valid from 29 Jan - 4 Feb 2021 and while supplies last. All prices are in US dollars (\$)

Police tighten Congress security in era of rising threats



House Speaker Nancy Pelosi of Calif. speaks at a news conference on Capitol Hill in Washington, Thursday, Jan. 28, 2021.

Continued from Front

The animosity lawmakers face has spread among themselves, with numerous Democrats saying they are wary of GOP colleagues who've said they carry guns in Washington. Republicans have bristled at new screening devices installed by House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., that lawmakers are required to pass through when entering the House chamber, where carrying firearms is not allowed. "The enemy is within the House of Representatives," Pelosi told reporters this week in a chilling characterization of Congress' internal tensions. She cited "members of Congress who want to bring guns on the

Associated Press
floor and have threatened violence on other members of Congress."

In the latest instance of Capitol Hill's spiraling personal hostility, Rep. Cori Bush, D-Mo., tweeted Friday that she was moving her office away from that of fellow freshman Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene, R-Ga., "for my team's safety." Bush wrote that a maskless Greene and her staff "berated me in a hallway," but did not specify why she felt unsafe.

Greene responded with a tweet of her own, saying, "She is lying to you. She berated me." Greene also called Bush, who is Black, "the leader of the St. Louis Black Lives Matter terrorist mob who trespassed into a gated neighborhood to

threaten the lives of the McCloskey's."

Last summer, Bush was among marchers on whom Mark and Patricia McCloskey drew firearms in a video that went viral. She is now one of Congress' most progressive members, and has sponsored a measure that could lead to expulsion for lawmakers who — like Greene — backed Trump's unjustified effort to reverse his November election defeat.

Greene has drawn fire from Democrats and some Republicans for past social media posts reported by various news organizations in which she's suggested support for killing Democratic politicians, unfounded QAnon theories and racist views.

Congress' 535 members travel frequently between their homes and the capital, and many have said they feel vulnerable in their districts and when they travel. Videos have shown people insulting lawmakers at airports, including Republican Sen. Mitt Romney of Utah, who has criticized Trump.

The Jan. 6 Capitol riot "reminds us of the grim reality that members of Congress are high-profile public officials, and therefore face

ongoing security threats from the same domestic terror groups that attacked the Capitol," 32 House members, nearly all Democrats, wrote to congressional leaders this week. Five people died in the attack, including a Capitol Police officer, and the House impeached Trump on a charge of inciting insurrection.

The House lawmakers' letter said while 902 threats against members of Congress were investigated in 2016, the number surged to 4,894 cases in 2018 and was tracking upward, according to Capitol Police testimony in 2019.

Limited local police resources and social media strewn with personal information and their real-time locations make lawmakers more vulnerable when they are home, their letter said. The House members asked for tightened security procedures. Pelosi told reporters that some steps have already been taken and that she'll likely seek money to bolster safety.

Members have been told they can use their office expenses to buy bullet-proof vests, which several have said they are wearing. Blodgett's letter said they can use those accounts

for security for themselves and their offices, and said a Federal Election Commission opinion lets them use campaign funds for home security systems.

The acting chief of the Capitol Police, Yogananda D. Pittman, said this week that "vast improvements" are needed to protect the Capitol and adjacent office buildings, including permanent fencing. Since Jan. 6, the Capitol has been surrounded by a tall barrier and the grounds are patrolled by National Guard troops.

Many lawmakers have long resisted giving the nation's symbol of democracy the look of a besieged compound, and leaders were noncommittal about permanent fencing.

President Joe Biden is in "close touch" with Pelosi about congressional security, White House press secretary Jen Psaki said.

Trump backers smashed their way into the U.S. Capitol after a morning speech in which he urged them to go there as Congress formally affirmed Joe Biden's election victory. That riot left five people dead and prompted the House to impeach him for inciting insurrection, for which he faces a Senate trial in February. □

FBI: Pipe bombs at RNC, DNC were planted night before riot

By MICHAEL BALSAMO
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Two pipe bombs left at the offices of the Republican and Democratic national committees, discovered just before thousands of pro-Trump rioters stormed the U.S. Capitol, were actually placed the night before, federal officials said Friday. The FBI said the investigation had revealed new information, including that the explosive devices were placed outside the two buildings between 7:30 p.m. and 8:30 p.m. on Jan. 5, the night before the riot. The devices were not located by law enforcement until the next day. It is not clear whether that



In this June 14, 2018, file photo, the FBI seal is seen before a news conference at FBI headquarters in Washington.

Associated Press
means the pipe bombs were unrelated to the next day's riot or were part of the riot planning. Both buildings are within a few blocks of the Capitol. The incident has been particularly concerning for law enforcement as officials step up security preparations ahead of the Senate's impeachment trial of former President Donald Trump. For weeks, investi-

gators have been worried about the potential for attacks on soft targets in the nation's capital.

U.S. Capitol Police and agents from the FBI and Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives were called to the Republican National Committee's office around 12:45 p.m. on Jan. 6. About 30 minutes later, as the agents and bomb technicians were still investigating at the RNC, another call came in for a second, similar explosive device found at the Democratic National Committee headquarters nearby. The two explosive devices were very similar, and both were about a foot long

with end caps and wiring that appeared to be attached to a timer, two law enforcement officials familiar with the matter have told The Associated Press. Investigators are still examining the devices and their components to determine the specific compounds inside the pipe bombs, but they both appeared to contain an unknown powder and some metal, the officials said. The FBI released additional photos of the explosive devices on Friday, including a photograph that showed one of the devices placed underneath a bush. Officials have also increased the reward in the case to \$100,000. □

Judge blocks Trump rule to limit health studies in EPA regs

By MATTHEW DALY

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A federal judge has blocked a last-minute rule issued by the Trump administration to limit what evidence the Environmental Protection Agency may consider as it regulates pollutants to protect public health.

Former EPA Administrator Andrew Wheeler said the Jan. 6 rule was aimed at ending what he and other Republicans call “secret science.” Some industry and conservative groups had long pushed for the change, saying public health studies that hold confidential and potentially identifying data about test subjects should be made public so the underlying data can be scrutinized before the EPA issues rules aimed at protecting public health.

Wheeler called the rule an attempt to boost transparency about government decision-making, but critics said it was hastily imposed and would threaten patient confidentiality and the privacy of individuals in public health studies that underlie federal regulations.

U.S. District Judge Brian Morris in Montana ruled late Wednesday that the EPA had unlawfully rushed the regulation, saying its decision to make it final just two weeks before then-President Donald Trump left office was “arbitrary”



President Joe Biden speaks during a meeting with Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen in the Oval Office of the White House, Friday, Jan. 29, 2021, in Washington.

and “capricious.” Morris delayed the rule until at least Feb. 5, giving the new Biden administration time to assess whether to go forward with it or make changes.

An EPA spokesman said Friday the agency is “committed to making evidence-based decisions and developing policies and programs that are guided by the best science.”

EPA “will follow the science and law in accordance with the Biden-Harris administration’s executive orders and other directives in reviewing all of the agency’s actions issued under the previous admin-

istration,” including the so-called Strengthening Transparency in Pivotal Science rule, spokesman Ken Labbe said in a statement.

Wheeler defended the rule, which was finalized in early January after years of debate.

“If the American people are to be regulated by interpretation of these scientific studies, they deserve to scrutinize the data as part of the scientific process and American self-government,” he wrote in a Jan. 4 op-ed in the Wall Street Journal. “Transparency is a defense of, not an attack on, the important work done by career scientists

at the EPA, along with their colleagues at research institutions around the country.” But the change was so broadly written that it could limit not only future public health protections, but also “force the agency to revoke decades of clean air protections,” said Chris Zarba, former head of the EPA’s Science Advisory Board.

He and other critics said the rule jeopardized use of public health studies, such as Harvard’s 1990s Six Cities study, which drew on anonymized, confidential health data from thousands of people to better establish links between air pollution

and higher mortality. The studies have been instrumental in crafting health and environmental rules for decades. The Six Cities study led to new limits on air pollutants under the Clean Air Act.

Ben Levitan, an attorney for the Environmental Defense Fund, which challenged the Trump rule in court, said the rule’s purpose was not to promote transparency, as Wheeler and other officials argued.

“Its purpose and effect is to disregard and devalue the harm pollutants and toxics cause, and therefore deprive the public of needed protection based on those studies,” Levitan said Friday.

The Trump rule would restrict regulators’ consideration of findings from public health studies unless the underlying data from them are made public. The rule deals with so-called dose response findings, which look at harm suffered at varying exposures to a pollutant or other toxic agent. The change, which was made final without a required 30-day notice, came after hundreds of thousands of earlier objections from scientists, public-health experts, regulators, academics, environmental advocates and others in public hearings and written remarks, in some of the strongest protests of a proposed EPA rule change. □

Associated Press

Fauci sees vaccination for kids by late spring or the summer

By R. ALONSO-ZALDIVAR and D. SUPERVILLE

ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON (AP) — The government’s top infectious disease expert said Friday he hopes to see some kids starting to get vaccinated for COVID-19 in the next few months. It’s a needed step to securing widespread immunity to the virus. Vaccines are not yet approved for children, but testing already is underway for those as young as 12. If those trials are successful, Dr. Anthony Fauci said they would be followed by another round

of testing down to those 9 years old. “Hopefully by the time we get to the late spring and early summer we will have children being able to be vaccinated,” Fauci said at a White House coronavirus briefing.

Fauci was looking ahead to a time vaccines will be plentiful. Even older adults are having difficulty getting shots at the moment. As of Thursday, only about 1.3% of Americans had been fully vaccinated with the required two doses of the currently available vaccines. Children represent about one-fourth of the

population, and for the U.S. to reach “herd immunity,” or widespread resistance, about 70% to 85% of the population must be vaccinated. “Children tend to not become as severely ill as adults but they can still become ill and some have tragically died,” said Dr. Leana Wen, a public health expert and emergency room physician, who supports Fauci’s goal. “Children can also be vectors of transmission, and getting children vaccinated is important as we strive for herd immunity.” The Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine has



In this image from video, Dr. Anthony Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases and chief medical adviser to the president, speaks during a White House briefing on the Biden administration’s response to the COVID-19 pandemic Wednesday, Jan. 27, 2021, in Washington.

Associated Press

emergency approval for use in people 16 and older.

Moderna’s vaccine is for those 18 and older. □

Conservatives praise South Carolina win on abortion ban

By JEFFREY COLLINS

Associated Press

COLUMBIA, S.C. (AP) —

As some conservatives in South Carolina celebrated getting a bill that would ban almost all abortions in the state past a legislative barrier and likely becoming law, they said they are not finished trying to end all abortions.

The ultimate goal of a number of groups that oppose abortion is what is called a "personhood law," which would dictate that life begins at conception. That would give a fetus the rights of any citizen and require "due process of law" to end its life under the U.S. Constitution. While other states have passed similar or even more restrictive abortion laws, none have gone that far. The South Carolina Senate on Thursday voted 30-13 in favor of a bill that would ban abortions after a fetal heartbeat is detected, which is usually around six weeks after conception and before many women know they are pregnant. The proposal had failed to get out the chamber for several years.

The bill goes to the House, which has passed similar proposals in previous sessions. South Carolina's governor has repeatedly said he will sign it.

"I'll tell you this from my heart. There isn't anything left but defending life at conception after that," said state Sen. Richard Cash, a Republican from Anderson County who has



South Carolina Gov. Henry McMaster touches the shoulders of South Carolina Citizens for Life Executive Director Holly Gatling after a news conference to celebrate the likelihood of a bill banning almost all abortions passing and getting to his desk after a news conference on Wednesday, Jan. 27, 2021, in Columbia, S.C. The Senate passed the bill on an initial vote.

Associated Press

made abortion his chief issue in the Senate.

The "South Carolina Fetal Heartbeat and Protection from Abortion Act" that passed the Senate this week isn't the only abortion related bill at the General Assembly. At least eight others have also been filed. There are House and Senate bills to declare life begins at conception and other proposals including requiring doctors to tell women who are given pills to cause an abortion that it can be reversed after one dose and to ban a rarely used procedure called dismemberment abortions. Rep. John McCravy, who often takes the lead

on abortion restrictions in the House, wants abortion banned in South Carolina too. But the Greenwood Republican expects the House to not change the bill the Senate passed this week to make it more restrictive. Any change would have to be approved again by the Senate. McCravy isn't sure the House will look at any other abortion legislation this year. But with a two-year session, he said there is plenty of time. "Maybe before the session is out. But right now we are concentrating on the heartbeat bill," McCravy said. The Senate debate this week showed while Republicans have made critical

gains in the Senate — the three seats picked up from Democrats in November proved crucial to this bill — there may not be enough support to go further.

One of the 30 Republicans, Sen. Sandy Senn of Charleston, voted against the bill. A second Republican said he could not vote for the bill until exceptions for pregnancies caused by rape and incest were added. Those exceptions were added quietly and there were no votes this week to determine if any other Republicans could support a more restrictive bill.

Democrats vowed to continue to fight the restrictions. Senate Minority Leader

Brad Hutto said they would also point out the money wasted on court fights over the issue while abortion opponents ignore a different way to get what they want. "If they wanted to be genuine about they believe, they should introduce a constitutional amendment to ban abortions," the Democrat from Orangeburg said. "They don't have the votes for that. They don't have the stomach for that."

Planned Parenthood and other abortion rights groups also promised to keep fighting this bill and any other restrictions, saying these decisions are between women and their doctors and it is shameful South Carolina does not spend this kind of effort improving education, expanding health care or fighting COVID-19, which help many more people.

Opponents of declaring life legally begins at conception said that declaration could also put on shaky legal ground some birth control like intrauterine devices where a fertilized egg is prevented from implanting in a uterus and in-vitro fertilizations where an egg and sperm are combined a number of times in a laboratory outside the womb in hopes one can grow to term.

In the lobby of the Statehouse this week, abortion opponents did not want to talk about specifically about future plans until the current bill gets through the Legislature. □

UW-Madison police chief bans 'Thin Blue Line' imagery



In this Aug. 30, 2020 file photo, an unidentified man participates in a Blue Lives Matter rally in Kenosha, Wis.

Associated Press

MADISON, Wis. (AP) — University of Wisconsin-Madison's police chief has banned officers from using "Thin Blue Line" imagery while on duty.

The move by Chief Kristen Roman follows criticism on social media of a "Thin Blue Line" flag displayed at the police department's office. The flag, which resembles a U.S. flag but has a blue stripe, is considered a sign of police solidarity, but has also been criticized as a symbol of white suprema-

cy. Roman said the flag has been "co-opted" by extremists with "hateful ideologies" and that her department needs to distance itself from the imagery to build trust with the community, the Wisconsin State Journal reported.

"We must consider the cost of clinging to a symbol that is undeniably and inextricably linked to actions and beliefs antithetical to UW-PD's values," she said in a Jan. 15 email.

Roman said the ban on public displays of "Thin Blue Line" imagery includes flags, pins, bracelets, notebooks, coffee mugs and other items. Tattoos are the exception.

"Thin Blue Line" flags were among those displayed by rioters who stormed the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6 in an attempt to overturn the election defeat of former President Donald Trump. Five people, including a U.S. Capitol Police officer, died in the riot. □

Canada to quarantine travelers, suspend flights south

By **ROB GILLIES**

Associated Press

TORONTO (AP) — Prime Minister Justin Trudeau on Friday announced stricter restrictions on travelers in response to new, likely more contagious variants of the novel coronavirus — including making it mandatory for travelers to quarantine in a hotel at their own expense when they arrive in Canada and suspending airline service to Mexico and all Caribbean destinations until April 30. Trudeau said in addition to the pre-boarding test Canada already requires, the government will be introducing mandatory PCR testing at the airport for people returning to Canada.

"Travelers will then have to wait for up to three days at an approved hotel for their test results, at their own expense, which is expected to be more than \$2000," Trudeau said.

"Those with negative test results will then be able to quarantine at home under significantly increased surveillance and enforcement."

The steep cost for the hotel stay includes the cost for a private PCR test, security,



Prime Minister Justin Trudeau holds a news conference at Rideau Cottage in Ottawa on Friday, Jan. 22, 2021.

food and the cost of measures the designated hotels will have to take to keep their workers safe.

"The cost is a ballparking. This isn't like any other facility. This is one where there has to be infection prevention control measures, security and other costs as well. It's not just a regular stay at a hotel," said Dr. Theresa Tam, Canada's chief public health officer. The prime minister said

those with positive tests will be immediately required to quarantine in designated government facilities to make sure they're not carrying variants of particular concern.

Trudeau also said the government and Canada's main airlines have agreed to suspend service to sun destinations right away. He said Air Canada, WestJet, Sunwing, and Air Transat are cancelling air service

to all Caribbean destinations and Mexico starting Sunday until April 30.

"They will be making arrangements with their customers who are currently on a trip in these regions to organize their return flights," Trudeau said.

He said starting next week, all international passenger flights must land at the following four airports: Vancouver, Toronto, Calgary and Montreal.

"We will also, in the coming weeks, be requiring non-essential travelers to show a negative test before entry at the land border with the US, and we are working to stand up additional testing requirements for land travel," Trudeau said.

Canada already requires those entering the country to self-isolate for 14 days and to present a negative COVID-19 test taken within three days before arrival.

Tam, Canada's top health official, said that security contractors will be going door-to-door to check on returnees who are isolating at home.

The move to require a hotel stay upon return would discourage vacations as people would not want to have to quarantine at a hotel at their own expense upon return.

"It's excellent. It's a shame it's this late. This is something they could have done ages ago," said Dr. Andrew Morris, a professor of infectious diseases at the University of Toronto and the medical director of the Antimicrobial Stewardship Program at Sinai-University Health Network.

"This is definitely a step in the right direction." □

Associated Press

Putin signs extension of last Russia-U.S. nuclear arms treaty

By **VLADIMIR ISACHENKOV**
Associated Press

Russian President Vladimir Putin on Friday signed a bill extending the last remaining nuclear arms control treaty between Russia and the United States a week before the pact was due to expire. Both houses of the Russian parliament voted unanimously Wednesday to extend the New START treaty for five years. Putin and U.S. President Joe Biden had discussed the nuclear accord a day earlier, and the Kremlin said they agreed to complete the necessary extension procedures in the next few days. New START expires Feb. 5. The pact's extension doesn't require con-

gressional approval in the U.S., but Russian lawmakers had to ratify the move. Russian diplomats said the extension will be validated by exchanging diplomatic notes once all the procedures are completed. The treaty, signed in 2010 by President Barack Obama and Russian President Dmitry Medvedev, limits each country to no more than 1,550 deployed nuclear warheads and 700 deployed missiles and bombers, and envisages sweeping on-site inspections to verify compliance. Biden indicated during the U.S. presidential campaign that he favored the preservation of New START, which was negotiated during his

tenure as vice president under Obama.

Russia had long proposed prolonging the pact without any conditions or changes, but the administration of former President Donald Trump waited until last year to start talks and made the extension contingent on a set of demands. The talks stalled, and months of bargaining failed to narrow differences. After both Moscow and Washington withdrew from the 1987 Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty in 2019, New START is the only remaining nuclear arms control deal between the two countries. Earlier this month, Russia announced that it would follow the U.S.



In this file photo taken on Wednesday, June 24, 2020, Russian RS-24 Yars ballistic missiles roll in Red Square during the Victory Day military parade marking the 75th anniversary of the Nazi defeat in Moscow, Russia.

Associated Press

in pulling out of the Open Skies Treaty, which allowed surveillance flights over military facilities to help build trust and transparency between Russia and the West. Arms control advocates hailed New START's extension as a boost to global

security and urged Russia and the U.S. to start negotiating follow-up agreements. Russia had offered before Biden took office to extend New START for five years — a possibility that was envisaged by the pact at the time it was signed. □

Dutch court orders Shell Nigeria to compensate farmers

By **MIKE CORDER**

Associated Press

THE HAGUE, Netherlands

(AP) — In a victory for environmentalists and Nigerians whose land was polluted by oil leaks, a Dutch appeals court ordered energy giant Shell's Nigerian subsidiary Friday to compensate farmers in two villages for damage to their land caused by leaks in 2004 and 2005.

Friends of the Earth Netherlands director Donald Pols hailed the ruling as a victory for small communities hurt by huge companies.

"Up until this morning, Dutch multinationals could act with impunity in developing countries ... and this has changed now," Pols said. "From this moment onwards, Dutch multinationals will be held accountable for their activities and their actions in developing countries. And that's an enormous victory for the rights of law globally."

The amount of compensation paid to three farmers in the villages will be established at a later date.

The Hague Court of Appeal held Shell's Nigerian subsidiary liable for two leaks that spewed oil over



Friends of the Earth supporters unfold a banner outside the district court in The Hague, Netherlands, Friday, Jan. 29, 2021, where the court is delivering its judgment in a long-running case in which four Nigerian farmers are seeking compensation and a cleanup from energy giant Shell for pollution caused by leaking oil pipelines in the Niger Delta.

an area of a total of about 60 football pitches (soccer fields) in two villages, saying that it could not be established "beyond a reasonable doubt" that saboteurs were to blame. Under Nigerian law, which was applied in the Dutch civil case, the company is not liable if the leaks were the result of sabotage.

One of the farmers involved in the case, Eric Dooh, called the decision a victory "for the entire Niger Delta region. The victory is for the Ogoni people. Victory for all that stood by our side, both Blacks and whites."

The Hague appeals court ruled that sabotage was to blame for an oil leak in

another village; however, it said that the issue of whether Shell can be held liable "remains open" and the case will be continued as the court wants clarification about the extent of the pollution and whether it still has to be cleaned up.

The court also ruled that Dutch-based mother company Royal Dutch Shell and

its Nigerian subsidiary must fit a leak-detection system to a pipeline that caused one of the spills.

The decision, which can be appealed to the Dutch Supreme Court, is the latest stage in a case that is breaking new legal ground in how far multinationals in the Netherlands can be held responsible for actions of their overseas subsidiaries.

In a written reaction, Shell Petroleum Development Company of Nigeria Limited expressed disappointment, saying it continued to believe that sabotage caused the spills in the villages of Oruma and Goi.

"Sabotage, crude oil theft and illegal refining are a major challenge in the Niger Delta," the company said. "Indeed, in 2019 around 95% of spill incidents from our operations there were due to such criminal acts. Regardless of cause, we clean up and remediate, as we have done with the spills in this case."

The Nigerian subsidiary added: "Like all Shell-operated ventures globally, we are committed to operating safely and protecting the local environment." □

Associated Press

China derecognizes British National Overseas passport

BEIJING (AP) — China said Friday it will no longer recognize the British National Overseas passport as a valid travel document or form of identification amid a bitter feud with London

over a plan to allow millions of Hong Kong residents a route to residency and eventual citizenship. The announcement by Foreign Ministry spokesperson Zhao Lijian on Friday

throws up new uncertainty around the plan just hours after the U.K. said it would begin taking applications for what are called BNO visas beginning late Sunday. Under the plan, as many as 5.4 million Hong Kong residents could be eligible to live and work in the U.K. for five years then apply for citizenship. Demand soared after Beijing last year imposed a sweeping new national security law on the former British colony following months of pro-democracy protests.

"The British side's attempt to turn a large number of Hong Kong people into second-class British citizens has completely changed the nature of the two sides' original understanding of BNO," Zhao told reporters at a daily briefing.

"This move seriously infringes on China's sovereignty, grossly interferes in Hong Kong affairs and China's internal affairs, and seriously violates international law and the basic norms of international relations," he said.

"China will no longer recognize the so-called BNO passport as a travel document and proof of identity starting from Jan 31st, and reserves the right to take further measures."

Many Hong Kongers carry multiple passports and it is unclear what if anything the Chinese government could do to prevent people entering the U.K. through the BNO visa plan. As a further protection of personal privacy, a cell-phone app will allow applicants to download their

biometric information without having to be seen visiting the British visa office.

The BNO passport was originally a disappointment for Hong Kongers when it was first offered ahead of Hong Kong's handover to Chinese rule in 1997. At the time, it offered only the right to visit for six months with no right to work or become a full citizen. Applicants had to have been born before the handover date.

However, pressure grew to expand such privileges as China increasingly cracked down on civil and political life in Hong Kong in what critics say violates China's commitment to maintain the city's separate way of life for 50 years after the handover. □



A British National Overseas passport (BNO) and a Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China passport are pictured in Hong Kong, Friday, Jan. 29, 2021.

Associated Press

Thousands left homeless by storms, floods in Syria's Idlib

By **BASSEM MROUE** and
GHAITH ALSAYED
Associated Press

IDLIB, Syria (AP) — For those who have fled war to shelter in Syria's last rebel-held stronghold, suffering knows no end.

A rainstorm lashing the country's northwest these days is spreading more misery, after rain and flooding less than two weeks ago killed one child and destroyed hundreds of tents, leaving tens of thousands of internally displaced Syrians homeless once again. The harsh weather conditions add to an already disastrous humanitarian situation with the spread of the coronavirus and a worsening economic crisis.

International aid groups have warned that reduced humanitarian access to this part of Syria will impede the response to the effects of the storm in a region already suffering from shortage of humanitarian aid.

"The reality is that people in this area are facing a catastrophic situation," said Mark Cutts, the U.N.'s deputy regional humanitarian coordinator for Syria.

"People in these camps are desperate, and humanitarians are overwhelmed by a crisis that the United Na-



Syrian refugees walk through a camp for displaced muddied by recent rains near the village of Kafr Aruq, in Idlib province, Syria, Thursday, Jan. 28, 2021.

Associated Press

tions warned was coming." Cutts' statement Thursday said at least 121,000 people in 304 sites in the region were badly affected when torrential rain and strong winds damaged or destroyed at least 21,700 tents. He said one child was killed and three other people were injured.

The rebel-held Idlib province and western parts of Aleppo last year witnessed a crushing Russian-backed

government offensive that displaced hundreds of thousands and damaged dozens of clinics and hospitals.

More than 3 million people, many of them already displaced by Syria's nearly 10-year conflict, live in the region.

The heavy rain led to floods in some of the tent settlements, washing away many of the people's belongings, including food,

at a time when the local currency briefly hit a record low of 3,600 Syrian pounds to the dollar on the black market this week, eradicating much of the citizens' purchase power.

The region has also registered more than 20,000 cases of coronavirus and 382 deaths amid a severe shortage of medical equipment.

Syria's conflict, which began in March 2011, has left

half a million people dead and half the country's pre-war population of 23 million displaced, with more than 5 million of them living as refugees outside the country.

Residents and aid groups have complained that the slow arrival of assistance into the almost besieged region is the result of last July's decision by the U.N. Security Council to limit for a year humanitarian aid deliveries to Syria's northwest to just one crossing point from Turkey.

When the first strong storm hit the region 10 days ago, Abed al-Yassin was sitting with his wife, three sons and one daughter when their tent collapsed and mud flooded in, forcing them to run to his neighbors' more solid tent. The next morning, he started building another tent nearby, making sure to surround it with sand from all sides to prevent water running in.

"Conditions are miserable over here," said al-Yassin, speaking over the phone as a strong wind howled in the background. Luckily, a few days ago they received some packs of pasta they are eating with vegetables for the time being. □

Associated Press Board:

Puerto Rico pays millions in salary to non-workers

By **DÁNICA COTO**
Associated Press

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico (AP) — A federal control board revealed Friday that the U.S. territory paid more

than \$28 million in salaries in recent months to people who no longer work for the U.S. territory's Education Department, even after officials last year flagged the practice as a problem.

The announcement came during a meeting of the board that oversees Puerto Rico's finances as the U.S. territory government undergoes a bankruptcy-like process.

"This is total outrage," said board member Antonio

Medina. "It's the worst kind of corruption. It's stealing the future of our children." The board first publicly flagged the problem in late September, announcing it had contacted federal and local law enforcement agencies after discovering the Education Department paid more than \$84 million in salaries to some 17,500 people from 2007 to 2020 who no longer worked there.

The board said the department failed to meet its requirement to implement a time and attendance system by mid-December.

"I don't feel surprised," said board member Andrew

Biggs. "After four years of observing the government of Puerto Rico in action, this doesn't shock me at all."

He noted that the government years ago had invested \$33 million in a time and attendance software system that is not used, leading to the loss of more than \$84 million over more than a decade.

The department has one of the largest government budgets, with \$1.36 billion allocated in fiscal year 2021, and the board called for the budget to be adjusted if the more than \$28 million is not recovered.

The Education Depart-

ment has struggled in recent years with millions of dollars in damage caused by hurricanes Irma and Maria in 2017 and a series of strong earthquakes that began in late 2019 that led to the permanent closure of several schools along the island's south coast.

Puerto Rico Gov. Pedro Pierluisi, who assumed office earlier this month and is the first governor to sit in on such meetings, said he was not aware of the recent payments. He pledged that implementing a time and attendance system will be a priority, adding that those who collected pay without working for

the government will be held accountable.

"They'll have to pay one way or another," he said. "Rest assured that we'll deal with this."

The ongoing issue comes as Puerto Rico continues to restructure a portion of its more than \$70 billion public debt load, accumulated from decades of unchecked borrowing of millions of dollars to cover ballooning deficits.

In 2015, the U.S. territory announced it was unable to pay its public debt. Two years later, it filed for the biggest U.S. municipal bankruptcy in history. □

The Ritz-Carlton, Aruba: Their brand culture makes them unique, join this Culinary Voyage

PALM BEACH — Paradise is a place where you encounter unforgettable experiences. From a culinary perspective, The Ritz-Carlton, Aruba is your only choice. The brand's culture is oriented towards the guests' experience and supporting local community at the same time. "At The Ritz-Carlton the genuine care and comfort of our guests is our highest mission and we need to anticipate and fulfill their unexpressed wishes and needs. We focus on that once -in- a -lifetime luxury experience," states Executive Chef Rafael Lopez Aliaga.

Lopez Aliaga has been working for the Ritz-Carlton company for fourteen years and the last four years he has been in Aruba. The Peruvian chef is clear about it: "We call our employees ladies and gentlemen because only when you take good care of your people can they genuinely care for the guests. And we do. We understand what our guests are looking for and we need to be one step ahead and make a personal connection. Knowing their name and remembering their preferences is what elevates their experience and gives our guests that 'home away from home' sensation."

Lopez Aliaga together with Executive Sous Chef, Stanwick Bloem, oversee the entire culinary department "Our goal is to create the best food experience so that our guests come back every time" says Bloem. The attention for detail at The Ritz-Carlton, Aruba is exceptional; children are invited into the kitchen to help bake pancakes, the complete staff is intensely trained on allergens and wherever you walk you are greeted with a sincere smile and with a 'Good Day'. This makes you feel very special and lifts up your mood.

Join us on the culinary voyage to paradise:



Australian Wagyu (left) and the Cowboy Steak (right)

Rung 1

BLT Steak, excelling in steaks

Aruban Mitchell Pereira is the Chef de Cuisine of BLT Steak. "We are a modern steakhouse with a menu that offers the best steaks on the island and a weekly menu that appears on our Blackboard to provide guests with the choice to try something different." He is extremely happy that The Ritz-Carlton, Aruba strives to employ as many locals as possible. "I am a young, local chef, ambitious to work with local farmers and fishermen. We offer delicious local lettuce and mouthwatering Aruban cheeses. With us, you get the highest quality with a local touch." When it comes to steaks, his personal favorite is the Dry Aged Kansas City Steak. However, the American Wagyu and Australian Wagyu are succulent as well. For seafood lovers BLT Steak offers East and West coast oysters, caviar, king crab, lobsters and much

more. The Blackboard menu of this week invites you to savor a wonderful Steak tartare, 12oz. Black Angus rib eye, 7oz. Caribbean Seabass, Jalapeño Potato, and a delicious Apple Crumble.



Rung 2

Madero Pool & Beach Grill, whole fish experience

The Ritz-Carlton's philosophy to support the local community is exemplified by their partnership with local fishermen. The impression of travelers of the Caribbean is the white-sandy beaches, waving palm trees and fresh, grilled fish from the sea to their plate; and that is exactly what Madero Pool & Beach Grill offers. "Sharing is caring, families love that," says Bloem. Therefore, the Whole Fish Experience offers a head-to-tail fresh catch of the day, grilled to perfection, and served for two people in its entirety to enjoy. "Of course the fish is deboned yet still presented with head and tail and accompanied by local sides like sweet plantain. Usually, we serve a delicious Red Snapper because this fish has very nice white meat, but it may vary depending on the catch and season." Tropical delight to the extreme we would say because Madero Pool & Beach Grill represents the sea, the white beach and grilled fish as a tasty gift of happiness.



Executive Sous Chef Stanwick Bloem presenting a Whole Local Fish – grilled or fried

Continued on Page 9

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The Ritz-Carlton, Aruba: Their brand culture makes them unique, join this Culinary Voyage



Homemade pasta with seasonal fresh ingredients.

Continued from Page 8

Rung 3

Casa Nonna New York

The name means 'Grandmother's House' in Italian. There are only two of them: one in the heart of New York City's Theater District, and the other one is on Aruba. In case you would like to taste what real Italian food with a New York twist is all about, you must come here. The menu is a culmination of traditional Roman and Tuscan fare, highlighted by fresh, local and seasonal ingredients. From salami, cheese and antipasti platters, to house-made pastas, the menu is available à la carte and family style, overflowing with options ideal for sharing. Andiamo a mangiare!



Executive Chef Rafael Lopez Aliaga with tiradito, Tuna Nikkei Ceviche

Rung 4

Divi Sushi Bar & Lounge, dushi Sushi

The Ritz-Carlton, Aruba stands out in many aspects, not only with its captivating dishes, but also in creating unforgettable experiences. The resort encompasses the values and philosophy on which they exercise an un-wavering commitment to service. Now, there are many corners in the hotel that can trigger your senses, but there is one place that you just cannot miss: the Divi Sushi Bar & Lounge. At this contemporary bar you will find the finest sushi, ceviche and poke bowls. Pick up your chopsticks and get ready to indulge.

Rung 5

Solano, strong start

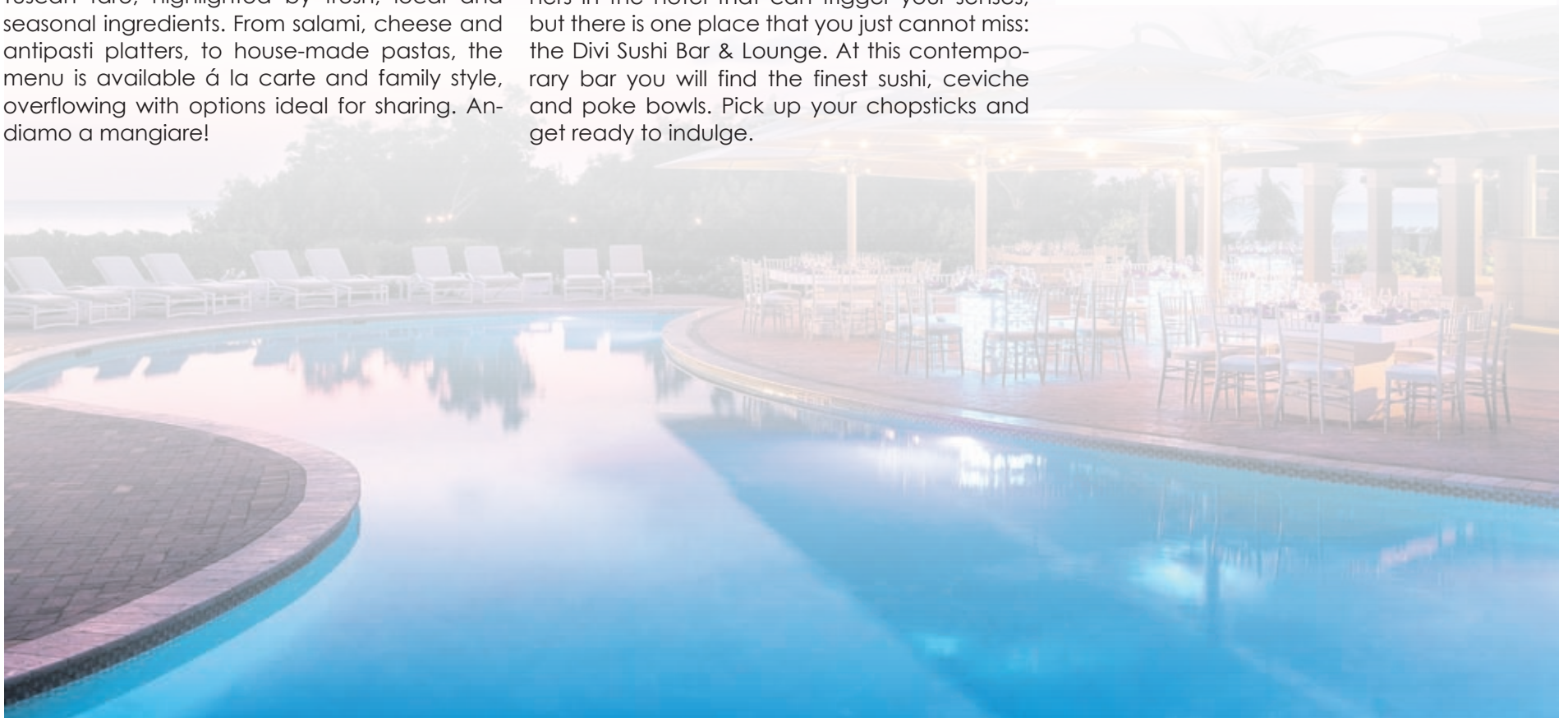
The ultimate start of your day in paradise starts with a breakfast buffet at Solano. The Ritz-Carlton, Aruba takes food safety and guest safety very seriously and adheres to all the necessary protocols.

Lopez Aliaga is delighted to serve the best of the best prepared by amazing talent. "As The Ritz-Carlton, we feel that it is our responsibility to enliven the Aruban culture. My goal is to have our kitchen run by locals combined with international talent. It would be my utmost pride to watch the team grow and share the Aruban culture and knowledge with other Ritz-Carlton's around the world..□



THE RITZ-CARLTON

ARUBA



Extra Dutch money for food aid Aruba and St. Maarten

ORANJESTAD — Aruba and St. Maarten will receive an additional 14.9 million euro for food aid, the Dutch cabinet has decided. The islands will survive until April with this. Curacao will not receive extra money because, according to the Netherlands, they will manage until April with the emergency amount already donated last year.

State Secretary Raymond Knops (Kingdom Relations) informed this in a letter to the Lower House. As

Knops indicated during his visit to Bonaire, Aruba and St. Maarten at the beginning of this month, the islands will have to do without this food aid program from the summer onward. "In the coming months, we will work towards a transition from food aid to a more long-term embedding of the program in the local authorities," says the State Secretary in the letter to Parliament. This also shows that this process starts earlier for Curacao with 'target date 1st of April'.

"The agreements concluded with Aruba, Curacao and Sint Maarten are simultaneously working on a stronger economy, so that fewer people become dependent on food aid and can provide in their own income. The expected effect of this is not clear yet," says Knops.

Dependent on food aid

20 percent of the population in Aruba and St. Maarten, and 15 percent in Curacao, is depending on Dutch food aid now, according

to the Netherlands. He emphasizes that in the transition the Netherlands will remain the starting point of 'not leaving the most vulnerable people to their own devices'. In Aruba, as previously reported, it is mostly undocumented immigrants who depend on emergency aid. The Aruban government has said from the start of the crisis that they will not help this group and will refer them to aid agencies such as the Red Cross. □

Source: Caribisch Netwerk

Birds of Aruba

ORANJESTAD — On May 11th, 2010, the Aruba Birdlife Conservation was founded with the aim of protecting the biodiversity in general and birds in and around Aruba in particular.

Among other things, the foundation will focus on increasing the survival chances of species of wild birds by promoting their preservation and conservation. The foundation publishes the most beautiful pictures of local birds on their social media that show us the beauty of Aruba's birds and nature in general. Aruba Today gives you a little peek with the following pictures and descriptions from the foundations Facebook page.



The Great Egret

Serenity in Aruba's National Park, a Great Egret flying in peace. When it is peaceful and quite, beautiful things start happening in nature.

Canadian in the house

The breeding season is over and it's getting pretty cold in North America. Shore birds have started moving southwards as early as July. This wetland beauty wants to keep its toes warm. Our Canadian friends know exactly where they can do so best. A Greater Yellowlegs rediscovering Aruba's Bubali Wetlands.



Cabochon

In its living form of so much more value than any gemstone. Aruba's smallest and most master of flight. A top pollinator. A hovering Blenchi inspecting the human who just entered his territory. English: Blue-tailed Emerald (male) Dutch: Blauwstaartsmaragd kolibrie (mannetje).

Aruba's to enjoy. Aruba's to protect. □

GameStop soars again; Wall Street bends under the pressure

By **STAN CHOE, DAMIAN J. TROISE and ALEX VEIGA**
AP Business Writers

Another bout of selling gripped the U.S. stock market Friday, as anxiety mounts over whether the frenzy behind a swift, meteoric rise in GameStop and a handful of other stocks will damage Wall Street overall.

The S&P 500 dropped 1.9%, giving the benchmark index its biggest weekly loss since October. The Dow Jones Industrial Average and Nasdaq each fell 2%. GameStop shot up nearly 70%, clawing back much of its steep loss from the day before, after Robinhood said it will allow customers to start buying some of the stock again. GameStop has been on a stupefying 1,600% run over the last three weeks and has become the battleground where swarms of smaller investors see themselves making an epic stand against the 1%.

The assault is directed squarely at hedge funds and other Wall Street titans that had bet the struggling video game retailer's stock would fall. Those firms are taking sharp losses, and other investors say that's pushing them to sell other stocks they own to raise cash. That, in turn, helps pull down parts of the market completely unrelated to the revolt underway by the cadre of smaller and novice investors.

The maniacal moves for GameStop and a few other formerly beaten-down stocks has drowned out many of the other issues weighing on markets, including the virus, vaccine rollouts and potential aid for the economy.

"Our consideration is whether this is something that is a long-term influence or contained within a handful of companies," said Tom Hainlin, national investment strategist at U.S. Bank Wealth Management.

Meanwhile, calls for regulators to step in are growing louder on Capitol Hill, and the Securities and Exchange Commission says



In this photo provided by the New York Stock Exchange, trader Thomas Ferrigno, left, works on the floor, Friday, Jan. 29, 2021.

Associated Press

it's carefully monitoring the situation.

"You've seen a lot of volatility this week, so when you have some unknowns like what you're seeing in the retail trading world, people are a little concerned at record highs here and taking some money off the table," said Megan Horneman, director of portfolio strategy at Verdence Capital Advisors.

The S&P 500 fell 73.14 points to 3,714.24. It ended the week with a 3.2% loss, its worst week in three months. It ended January with a 1.1% loss, its first monthly decline since October. The S&P 500 is still up 13.6% since the end of October.

Some of the heaviest weights on the index were Apple, Microsoft and other Big Tech stocks that have been big winners for professional and other investors over the last year.

The Dow lost 620.74 points to 29,982.62, while the tech-heavy Nasdaq composite slid 266.46 points to 13,070.69. The Russell 2000 index of smaller companies gave up 32.97 points, or 1.6%, to 2,073.64.

Other forces also weighed on the market. Johnson & Johnson fell 3.6% after it said its vaccine appears to protect against COVID-19, though not as powerfully as rivals. Analysts said the results, which would require

just one shot instead of the two required by other vaccine makers, were below expectations.

Elsewhere, investors watched virus infection spikes in Europe and Asia, renewed travel curbs and negotiations in Washington over President Joe Biden's proposed \$1.9 trillion economic aid package. Hopes for such stimulus for the economy have carried the S&P 500 and other major indexes back to record highs recently, along with enthusiasm about COVID-19 vaccines and the Federal Reserve's pledge to keep the accelerator floored on its help for the economy. Low interest rates from the Fed can act like steroids for stocks and other investments.

"We are still moving towards a recovery from the pandemic, just a heck of a lot bumpier than anyone had expected," said Stephen Innes of Axi in a report.

Wall Street's focus remains squarely on GameStop and other moonshot stocks. AMC Entertainment jumped 53.7%, and headphone company Koss vaulted 52.5%. After their success with GameStop, traders have been looking for other downtrodden stocks in the market where hedge funds and other Wall Street firms are betting

on price drops.

By rallying together into these stocks, they are triggering something called a "short squeeze." In that, a stock's price can explode higher as investors who had bet on price declines scramble to get out of their trades.

The smaller investors, meanwhile, have been crowing about their empowerment and saying the financial elite are simply getting their comeuppance after years of pulling away from the rest of America.

"We've had their boot on our necks for so (expletive) long that the sudden rush of blood to our brains when we have just a (asterisk)chance(asterisk) of getting free has made me feel ... well, it's made me feel," one user wrote on a Reddit discussion about GameStop stock.

"I've been isolated throughout this entire pandemic and live in a state far from home or any sense of community," another user replied. "I'd kind of just... given up. These last few weeks I've started caring again; feeling impassioned again; wanting more again."

Most of Wall Street and other market watchers say they expect the smaller-pocketed investors who are pushing up GameStop to eventually get burned. The struggling retailer is ex-

pected to still lose money in its next fiscal year, and many analysts say its stock should be closer to \$15 than \$330.

In response, many users on Reddit have said they can keep up the pressure longer than hedge funds can stay solvent, although they often use more colorful language to say that.

This week, Robinhood and other online trading platforms restricted trading in GameStop and other stocks that have soared recently, prompting outrage from individual investors on Twitter and other social media sites. After easing up on some of the restrictions early Friday, Robinhood tightened them again throughout the day, limiting the number of GameStop shares that customers could buy. By 3:03 p.m. Eastern time, they could not purchase any more if they already had at least one share.

Jacob Frenkel, a former SEC enforcement attorney and federal prosecutor, suggested it may have made sense for the market watchdog agency to suspend trading for up to 10 days in GameStop stock, under its legal authority.

Merely monitoring the situation, without SEC action, "is like putting safety experts in a permanent front-row seat in front of a runaway roller coaster," Frenkel said.

An enforcement investigation by the agency would need to determine whether there were violations of the securities laws, said Frenkel, who heads the government investigations practice at law firm Dickinson Wright.

Both the Senate Banking Committee and the House Financial Services Committee plan to hold hearings on the GameStop controversy.

"The capital markets need to be less of a casino and more of a place where people ... can invest in companies that are leading the new economy," said Rep. Brad Sherman, D-Calif., who heads the Financial Services subcommittee on investor protection. □

By Sea of Galilee, archaeologists find ruins of early mosque

By ILAN BEN ZION

Associated Press

TIBERIAS, Israel (AP) — Archaeologists in Israel say they have discovered the remnants of an early mosque — believed to date to the earliest decades of Islam — during an excavation in the northern city of Tiberias.

This mosque's foundations, excavated just south of the Sea of Galilee by the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, point to its construction roughly a generation after the death of the Prophet Mohammad, making it one of the earliest Muslim houses of worship to be studied by archaeologists.

"We know about many early mosques that were founded right in the beginning of the Islamic period," said Katia Cytryn-Silverman, a specialist in Islamic archaeology at Hebrew University who heads the dig. Other mosques dating from around the same time, such as the Prophet's Mosque in Medina, the Great Mosque of Damascus, and Jerusalem's Al-Aqsa mosque, are still in use today and cannot be tampered with by archaeologists.

Cytryn-Silverman said that excavating the Tiberian mosque allows a rare chance to study the architecture of Muslim prayer houses in their infancy and indicates a tolerance for other faiths by early Islamic leaders. She announced the findings this month in a virtual conference.



This 2013 aerial photo shows the site of the Al-Juma (Friday) Mosque in Tiberias, northern Israel.

When the mosque was built around 670 AD, Tiberias had been a Muslim-ruled city for a few decades. Named after Rome's second emperor around 20 AD, the city was a major center of Jewish life and scholarship for nearly five centuries. Before its conquest by Muslim armies in 635, the Byzantine city was home to one of a constellation of Christian holy sites dotting the Sea of Galilee's shoreline.

Under Muslim rule, Tiberias became a provincial capital in the early Islamic empire and grew in prominence. Early caliphs built palaces on its outskirts

along the lake shore. But until recently, little was known about the city's early Muslim past.

Gideon Avni, chief archaeologist with the Israel Antiquities Authority, who was not involved in the excavation, said the discovery helps resolve a scholarly debate about when mosques began standardizing their design, facing toward Mecca.

"In the archaeological finds, it was very rare to find early mosques," he said.

Archaeological digs around Tiberias have proceeded in fits and starts for the past century. In recent

decades the ancient city has started yielding other monumental buildings from its past, including a sizeable Roman theater overlooking the water and a Byzantine church.

Since early last year, the coronavirus pandemic halted excavations and lush Galilean grasses, herbs and weeds have grown over the ruins. Hebrew University and its partners, the German Protestant Institute of Archaeology, plan to restart the dig in February.

Initial excavations of the site in the 1950s led scholars to believe that the building was a Byzantine mar-

ketplace later used as a mosque.

But Cytryn-Silverman's excavations delved deeper beneath the floor. Coins and ceramics nestled among at the base of the crudely crafted foundations helped date them to around 660-680 AD, barely a generation after the city's capture. The building's dimensions, pillared floor-plan, and qiblah, or prayer niche, closely paralleled other mosques from the period.

Avni said that for a long time, academics weren't sure what happened to cities in the Levant and Mesopotamia conquered by the Muslims in the early 7th century.

"Earlier opinions said that there was a process of conquest, destruction and devastation," he said. Today, he said, archaeologists understand that there was a "fairly gradual process, and in Tiberias you see that."

The first mosque built in the newly conquered city stood cheek by jowl with the local synagogues and the Byzantine church that dominated the skyline. This earliest phase of the mosque was "more humble" than a larger, grander structure that replaced it half a century later, Cytryn-Silverman said.

"At least until the monumental mosque was erected in the 8th century, the church continued being the main building in Tiberias," she added. □

Associated Press

Tropical cyclones are nearing land more, except in Atlantic



In this Aug. 9, 2019 satellite image made available by NASA, Typhoon Lekima, left, skirts north of Taiwan and towards eastern China.

Associated Press

BY SETH BORENSTEIN
AP Science Writer

Tropical cyclones across the globe, except Atlantic hurricanes, are moving closer to land in recent decades, a new study found. Also called typhoons, tropical cyclones generally have been moving westward by about 18 miles per decade (30 kilometers) since 1982, putting them closer to land and making them more dangerous, a study in Thursday's journal Science said. Each decade since the 1980s, an

additional two cyclones have come within 124 miles (200 kilometers) of land, the study said.

Researchers don't quite know why this is happening, but it adds to other ominous trends in cyclone activity. Past studies have found that the most intense storms are getting stronger and storms in general are getting wetter, shifting poleward, moving slower and are keeping their power longer after hitting land. But while the new study found storms are getting

closer to land, researchers still haven't seen a significant increase in landfalls, which "is still a puzzle," said study lead author Shuai Wang, a cyclone scientist at Imperial College in London. "It's not only the landfall that causes damage. When the cyclone is close enough to land it can also cause damage like Hurricane Sandy and Dorian a few years ago," Wang said, who also mentioned 2019's Typhoon Lekima, one of the costliest in Chinese history. □

Guinea worm closer to eradication as cases halve in a year

By **CARLEY PETESCH** and **ALEX SANZ**
Associated Press
DAKAR, Senegal (AP) — Just over two dozen people in the world are infected with Guinea worm, according to a new report that says community programs are close to eradi-

cating the disease in which a meter-long worm slowly emerges from a blister in a person's skin. The U.S.-based Carter Center, which leads the eradication campaign, says just 27 cases were reported in 2020 in six countries in sub-Saharan Africa, or half the number of cases in 2019. The center said animal infections also showed a 20% decline. The reduction in cases is welcome in the health community as the coronavirus pandemic surges globally. Despite cuts to many programs worldwide, The Carter Center said its



In this March 9, 2007 file photo, a Guinea worm is extracted by a health worker from a child's foot at a containment center in Savelugu, Ghana.

Associated Press

community-based program to eradicate Guinea worm remained up to 95% operational. "We're reporting a 50% reduction in human cases, down to only 27 people in the world last year that had Guinea worm. And that's compared to in 1986 when there were 3.5 million people annually reporting Guinea worm disease across about 21

countries, mostly in sub-Saharan Africa, but also in the Middle East and in Asia," Adam Weiss, director of The Carter Center's Guinea Worm Eradication Program, told The Associated Press. □

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By Dave Green

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		4	8		3	1		
6								4
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1				5				6

Difficulty Level ★★★★★

1/30

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Editor
Caribbean Speed Printers N.V.
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Assistant Director
Xiomara Arends

Editor in Chief
Linda Reijnders
(linda.reijnders@cspnv.com)
Liza Koolman (Management assistant)

Editors
Richard Brooks

Sales
Linda Reijnders
(linda.reijnders@cspnv.com)
Sulaika Croes

Classifieds
classified@cspnv.com

Distribution and Collection
accounting@bondia.com

Social / Website
Juan Luis Pinto
Pilar Flores

Columnists
Anthony Croes
Joris Zantvoort
Thais Franken

Weststraat 22
T: 582-7800
E: news@arubatoday.com
W: www.arubatoday.com
@arubatoday

Retiring Brokaw: Journalists should get out of power centers

By **DAVID BAUDER**

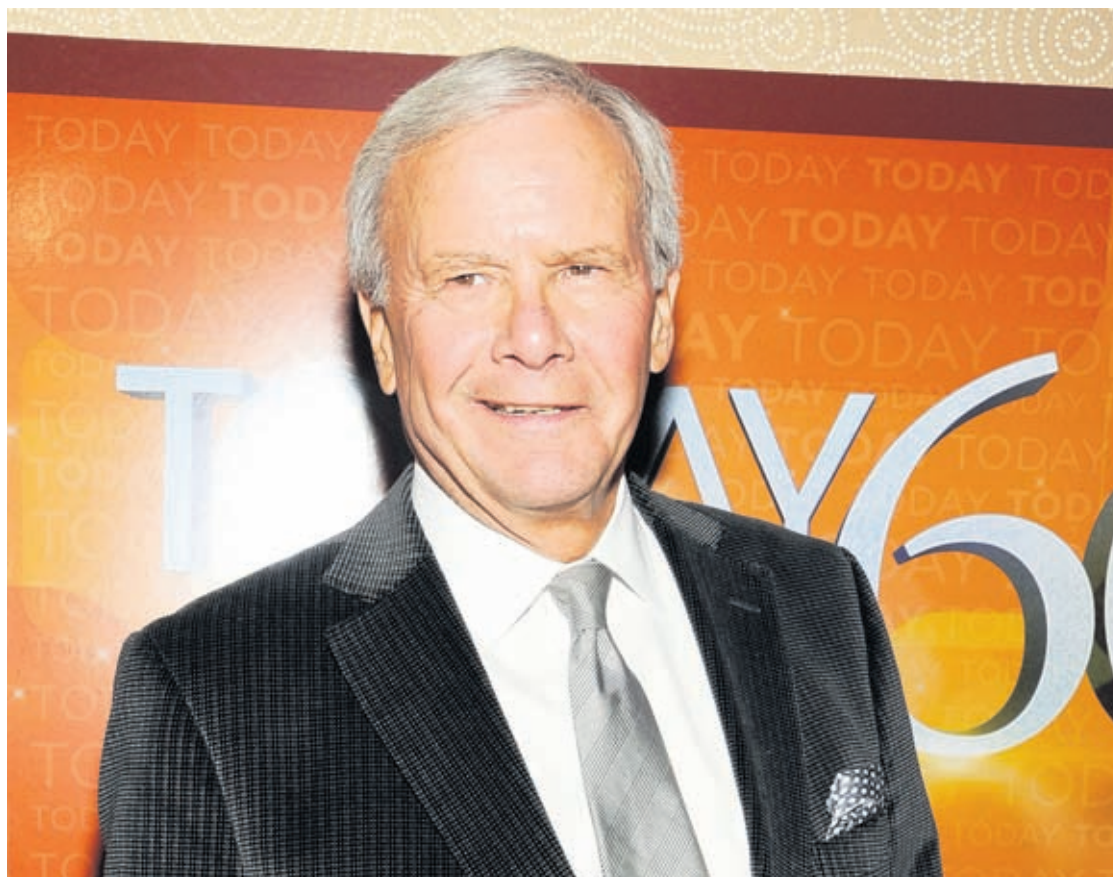
AP Media Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — If Tom Brokaw has one piece of advice to leave for television journalists upon his retirement, it's to get out to more of the country —and not just to visit.

The Capitol insurrection is but one example of a story that might not have seemed as much a surprise if more journalists were attuned to communities outside of the power centers, the veteran NBC newsmen said. Television news is "much, much too wedded to the East Coast and West Coast only" and needs to expand its presence across the country.

"Take some of the people who are only in Washington and send them to Salt Lake City or Kansas City, or St. Louis for that matter," he said in an interview with The Associated Press.

Brokaw, who turns 81 next month, announced last week that he's retiring from NBC News, where he worked for 55 years. He said he's been overwhelmed and heartened by the outpouring of good wishes from colleagues and people who watched him on TV for many of those years. He's been away from the power centers himself, and hasn't been to New York since before the onset of the coronavirus pandemic. He has split time between



This Jan. 12, 2012 file photo shows NBC News special correspondent and former "Today" show host Tom Brokaw, attending the "Today" show 60th anniversary celebration in New York.

Associated Press

homes in Montana and Florida.

His advice to the industry he's leaving behind has nothing to do with the sort of they-don't-make-'em-like-they-used-to criticism you might get from older people in any business. Brokaw said he's impressed with the work of young journalists at NBC News and elsewhere, and is invested in seeing them succeed.

He believes a reorientation can take place without a significant outlay of money

for an industry that has seen a two-decade decline in local news coverage.

"I don't want to knock what they're doing now because they get on an airplane and go to these places and they do a good job," he said. "But I always found it was best to invest yourself in different parts of the country and get to know the politics and culture."

He's pessimistic about a change in the public's attitude toward the press after

four years in which President Donald Trump considered journalists the enemy.

"I don't think there will be a full recovery," he said. "I think this is baked in."

Brokaw has kept busy in the years since he stepped down as "NBC Nightly News" anchor in 2004, doing documentaries, appearing on "Morning Joe" and the network during newsy occasions for commentary and writing. He's finishing a book about his parents and their life grow-

ing up during the Depression in South Dakota. For two decades, Brokaw, Peter Jennings at ABC and Dan Rather at CBS dominated television news — a period in which cable and digital news sources either didn't exist or weren't nearly as established as they are. Brokaw recalled that when the late Jennings was asked whether the three men were friends he responded, "kind of." They were competitors but had a shared value system, Brokaw said.

"I grew up in Yankton, South Dakota, hoping that one day maybe I'll get to appear on NBC News with (Chet) Huntley and (David) Brinkley," he said. "And, by God, it was within three years I was on Huntley-Brinkley, first from Omaha and then from California." It was bang, bang, bang, just like that," he said, "and it frankly astonished me, astonished my parents and my friends back in South Dakota. I caught the merry-go-round and I was in the right place at the right time."

Asked how he was feeling, Brokaw said, "mixed, frankly." He was diagnosed in 2013 with multiple myeloma, an incurable blood cancer that affects the bone marrow, and this has led to painful back surgery. He got his first dose of COVID vaccine this past week. □



This image released by Netflix shows Chadwick Boseman, from left, Colman Domingo, Viola Davis, Michael Potts and Glynn Turman in "Ma Rainey's Black Bottom."

Associated Press

By **MARK KENNEDY**

AP Entertainment Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Netflix is once again the top contender at the GLAAD Media Awards with 26 nomina-

tions, snapping up film nods for "Ma Rainey's Black Bottom" and "The Prom," comedy series nominations for "Dead to Me" and "Big Mouth" and drama TV nods

Netflix leads GLAAD Media Awards for LGBTQ representation

for "The Umbrella Academy" and "Ratched."

Netflix has for the past few years led the annual GLAAD nominations, which honors media for fair and accurate representations of LGBTQ people. HBO Max followed this year with nine nominations, and Amazon, Hulu and HBO each received four.

The Hallmark Channel received its first nomination for "The Christmas House," the network's first holiday movie featuring a gay lead character. GLAAD also noted that transgender char-

acters were prominently featured in "9-1-1: Lone Star," "Star Trek: Discovery," "Saved by the Bell," "Big Mouth" and "Supergirl."

Award recipients will be announced during a virtual ceremony scheduled for April.

"This year's nominees remind us that even in times of political and cultural division, diverse LGBTQ representation and visibility can enlighten, entertain, and create lasting change," said GLAAD President & CEO Sarah Kate Ellis in a statement.

The organization also noted that Ryan Murphy created, directed and produced six nominees this year — "The Prom," "Boys in the Band," "Circus of Books," "Hollywood," "Ratched" and "9-1-1: Lone Star." □

2	3	5	7	1	9	6	4	8
7	9	1	4	8	6	2	5	3
4	6	8	5	3	2	9	1	7
9	5	4	8	6	3	1	7	2
6	2	7	1	9	5	8	3	4
8	1	3	2	4	7	5	6	9
5	4	2	6	7	8	3	9	1
3	7	6	9	2	1	4	8	5
1	8	9	3	5	4	7	2	6

Difficulty Level ★★★★★ 1/30

Islanders lament 'wasted' week going into series at Flyers

By **STEPHEN WHYNO**

AP Hockey Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — In a five-day span, the New York Islanders got shut out by a third-string goalie, allowed a go-ahead goal in the final minute and blew a three-goal lead.

Three games, three regulation losses and zero points to show for it.

Instead of approaching first place in the East, the Islanders go into a weekend series at Philadelphia not far from the bottom of the division. After a "wasted" 0-2 trip to Washington, coach Barry Trotz's team is trying to pull itself together.

"Our confidence a little bit has been rattled," Trotz said Thursday night. "This is a punch in the mouth and an upper cut to the jaw and you've just got to pick yourself up off the floor because no one else is going to do it."

The latest blow might be the hardest to swallow because the Islanders were in command up 3-0 on the Capitals before everything fell apart. It was over after four goals against in 5:09, and the final score of 6-3 was ugly.

"We had a pretty bad lapse," captain Anders Lee said. "It turns into a bad loss."



Washington Capitals defenseman Brenden Dillon (4) shoves New York Islanders left wing Anders Lee (27) during the third period of an NHL hockey game Thursday, Jan. 28, 2021, in Washington.

Associated Press

It's worse in the context of the previous two. New Jersey's Scott Wedgewood blanked the Islanders on Sunday night, and then they thought they'd at least be headed to overtime against Washington on Tuesday night before Justin Schultz scored with 26.4 seconds left.

"You go through ups and downs through the season," defenseman Scott Mayfield said. "This one seems pretty low."

During an 82-game sea-

son, three games without a point isn't reason to panic. But with the schedule shortened to 56 games and all the play inside the division, it was a costly five days.

Lee pointed out that New York lost its final seven games last season before the pandemic put hockey on pause until August. Almost that entire team is back and will try to draw from that experience.

"We've had tough stretches," Lee said. "It's a tough time to have a bad start.

There's no excuse for that, and we've got to right the ship right away and we've got a great chance to finish this road trip with a couple games in Philly."

The Flyers won two in a row against the same Devils that beat the Islanders on Sunday. They're in third place, the Islanders are in seventh and as general manager Lou Lamoriello's longtime friend Yogi Berra said, it's getting late early.

"We can't look back," Trotz said. "But there is an urgen-

cy level. I think there's an urgency level right through the whole division because the whole division is ultra competitive. There's not much difference between the top teams and the bottom teams, and so it is going to be the grind. Let's embrace the grind, the battle and stay in the fight." The Islanders came out fighting. After going to the Eastern Conference final in the NHL's playoff bubble last summer, they won three of their first four this season, and a blowout loss to the rival Rangers looked like a blip. There were plenty of reasons to believe this team could put together another deep run. Semyon Varlamov led all goal-tenders with a 0.33 goals-against average and .988 save percentage in a 3-0 start before losing twice to Washington, which drafted him in the first round in 2006. But little of this is on Varlamov, so the Islanders have to figure out how to fix what's wrong with them before it's too late.

"Everyone wants to pile on right now," Trotz said. "Sometimes when you think it gets the darkest, that's when you're closets to breaking out of it. So that's what we're going to hold onto right now." □

MLS sets new negotiation deadline, warns of possible lockout

By **ANNE M. PETERSON**

AP Sports Writer

Major League Soccer has extended its deadline for negotiating adjustments to the existing collective bargaining agreement until Feb. 4 and warned it is prepared to lock out players if a deal isn't reached by then.

"Given the impact of COVID-19 on how clubs will need to operate during preseason, we must finalize an agreement in the coming days in order to provide teams and players adequate time to prepare for the opening of training camps," the league said in a statement Friday.

The league set the new deadline of 11:59 p.m. EST, Feb. 4 after the Major

League Soccer Players Association submitted a proposal just hours ahead of the original deadline. The union proposed extending the current collective bargaining agreement with the league through the 2026 season.

The league's proposal includes paying players their full salaries in 2021 in exchange for an extension through the 2027 season.

"In our discussions with the MLSA, we have emphasized the importance of the two-year extension to allow the league and clubs to recover a portion of the losses incurred in 2021 as a result of the pandemic while protecting the long-term health of the League by providing stability which

promotes ongoing investment," the league said.

MLS has said it lost nearly \$1 billion last season, due in part to the pandemic as it played in mostly empty stadiums and with increased costs for testing and charter flights. The league said it expects similar losses this year.

The league invoked a force majeure clause last month to reopen negotiations over the CBA, citing ongoing uncertainty because of the COVID-19 crisis.

The league's new season is set to open April 3 with pre-season training camps allowed to begin on Feb. 22. The union has said it hopes to avoid a lockout.

"It is our sincere hope that it can be avoided," the



Sporting Kansas City defender Amadou Dia (13) attempts to maneuver past the defense of Orlando City midfielder Sebas Mendez (8) during an MLS soccer game in Kansas City, in this Wednesday, Sept. 23, 2020, file photo.

Associated Press

MLSPA said in a statement. "Players are ready to play." The league and the union had two difficult negotiations last year — one in

February before the start of the season and a second in June when players took a pay cut in order to resume the 2020 season. □

Chiefs trying for first Super Bowl repeat win in 16 years

By **BARRY WILNER**
AP Pro Football Writer

Do it again?

Not in the NFL, at least not lately.

On Feb. 7, the Kansas City Chiefs will be the latest franchise to attempt winning successive Super Bowls when they take on the Buccaneers. In Tampa, of all places. Against Tom Brady, of all people.

It's an achievement simply to get this far once again.

"The thing I can see as a positive is the record, that we've persevered through some tough games," Chiefs coach Andy Reid said, "and so the mental toughness to do that individually each week was important, knowing that you're going to get people's best shot, and there's the respect factor."

"They didn't question each other, they didn't question the coaches, they stayed focused and delivered. However, that falls in, I'm not sure how to categorize that, but I just think that might have been the biggest challenge. You've seen that with teams, when things aren't going right, they just kind of fall apart there. Our guys have not done that, they all stuck together and trusted."

Only twice since the Patriots pulled off the most recent repeat in the 2003 and 2004 seasons has a champion gotten back to the big game. Seattle failed in



In this Sunday, Jan. 17, 2021 file photo, Kansas City Chiefs head coach Andy Reid, right, watches quarterback Patrick Mahomes warm up before an NFL divisional round football game against the Cleveland Browns in Kansas City.

Associated Press

the 2014 season — against New England, no less; remember Malcolm Butler's goal-line interception? — and the Patriots in the 2017 season, the Super Bowl featuring the Philly Special. Super Bowl repeats once were relatively common. The first two went to the Lombardi Packers. Don Shula's Dolphins soon replicated the feat, even throwing in a perfect season for 1972. And Pittsburgh's Steel Curtain not only went back to back in the 1974 and '75 seasons, they did so again in 1978 and '79.

We're not done. The Bill Walsh/Joe Montana 49ers

were the 1988 and '89 champions; Dallas and its Hall of Fame Triplets of Emmitt Smith, Troy Aikman and Michael Irvin pulled off the double in 1992 and '93; then John Elway finished off his illustrious Broncos career with two straight NFL titles in 1997 and '98.

But since Tom Brady took New England to the top 2003 and '04, nothing.

"It's hard, you know?" Brady has said — and he is heading to his record 10th Super Bowl.

Brady led New England to its first NFL title in the 2001 season, a second-year backup until Drew Bledsoe

suffered a chest injury in the second game of the schedule. After missing the playoffs entirely in 2002, the Patriots were primed for another championship challenge the next year. They put together a league-best 14-2 record sparked by the defense (238 points allowed, an NFL low) at a time when Brady was not yet an offensive force.

That defense featured one Pro Football Hall of Famer, cornerback Ty Law; a 2021 finalist for the hall, lineman Richard Seymour, and such other notables as Tedy Bruschi, Rodney Harrison, Willie McGinest and Mike Vrabel.

But Brady was the man in a weird Super Bowl in Houston, when no points were scored in the opening or third quarter. But 61 points were packed into the other two periods, and Brady went 32 for 48 for 354 yards with three touchdowns and one interception.

After the Panthers tied it 29-29, John Kasay kicked off out of bounds. From there, Brady led the winning drive to Adam Vinatieri's 41-yard field goal.

"I don't know how I do it," Brady said then, with a laugh. "We just were trying to keep our poise. You realize in games like this you've got to play for 60 minutes. We made enough plays toward the end to win it. ... That's what happens in Super Bowls."

As it did against the Rams a couple of seasons before.

"Maybe it was a little déjà vu of two years ago," Vinatieri said then. "Tom did it again, he's amazing. This supporting cast did it again and gave me a chance."

After winning the 2001 title, New England faltered and failed to make the postseason the next year. Applying lessons they learned from that disappointment, the Patriots again went 14-2 in 2004. Brady was becoming more of a presence as a passer, though his targets weren't standouts; Randy Moss, Rob Gronkowski and Julian Edelman weren't yet aboard. □

Griffey hired as MLB senior adviser for youth development

NEW YORK (AP) — Ken Griffey Jr. has been hired as a senior adviser to baseball Commissioner Rob Manfred.

The Hall of Fame outfielder will work in baseball operations and on youth baseball development. He is tasked with improving diversity at amateur levels, Major League Baseball said Friday. Griffey will work as an MLB ambassador at youth initiatives and at its special events, including the postseason and the All-Star Game.

"We welcome the perspective and insights that Ken gained as an historic player, as a parent, and as someone who has spent his life in and around our great game," Manfred said in a statement.

Griffey was a 13-time All-Star who hit .284 with 630 home runs and 1,836 RBIs in 22 seasons for Seattle (1989-99, 2009-10), Cincinnati (2000-08) and the Chicago White Sox (2008). He was elected to the Hall in 2016. □



National Baseball Hall of Fame inductee Ken Griffey Jr. speaks during induction ceremonies in Cooperstown, N.Y., in this Sunday, July 24, 2016, file photo.

Associated Press